

From ^O_R Point ^O_F View

the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

A Journal Excerpt by Cindy Baker (June 15th to July 14th)

Wednesday 6-15-05

Where has the time gone? Again, I have failed at writing in my journal on a daily basis. I would play catch-up but I can't seem to remember what I've done in the last couple of days. Let me think...last night Aaron bought a rat trap to catch our rat. The thing is the biggest trap I have ever seen! It looks like it could catch a small elephant! (That might be a *slight* exaggeration on my part). We didn't catch him overnight. He thinks the trap was set too tight...but not for long! Tonight he is a dead rat! Today Shawnda, Kaela and I went to town and Shawnda and I got our calico (material) to cover our couch cushions. We are hoping Rose will be able to work on them in the next week or so. She is sewing them for free but we will give her a nice thank you gift for her time. Late this morning a truck came and took away the previous renter's moving crate from in front of our house. Now our crate will have a place to sit when it comes. This afternoon Samson came to study with Aaron, then he ate dinner with us. I made spaghetti. He had never eaten spaghetti before! It guess he liked it because he said it was "nambawan (#1)" and he asked me to teach him how to cook it and other American meals. He wants to go to Malakula and cook them for his family. Our team really likes him and believe that if he is converted to the faith he will be a great asset to the church here!

Thursday 6-16-05

He is a dead rat! I knew he wouldn't make it through the night! Let's just hope he doesn't have any...friends. Rachel didn't come to clean today. She didn't come Monday to do laundry either. We were supposed to have a Bible study today also. It may be that she is just sick and cannot come but, there is also the good possibility that the Mormon church leaders told her not to come back since we have been studying the Bible. Last week we studied the Godhead. It was a study that was filled with Biblical refutations of Mormon doctrine. I tried to gear the study towards combating their belief in multiple gods, that man can become a god and that God was once a man. We will see if she comes on Monday. I hope she has only been sick because I really want to continue our study.

Saturday 6-18-05

This morning Aaron and I celebrated Father's Day. We went out to breakfast at Jill's American Way Café and stuffed ourselves full of our American favorites. We ordered enough food to choke a horse and it was all great! We each ordered the Mini-American (2 eggs, bacon and toast). Then we split an order of blueberry pancakes on the side and each had coffee. We hadn't had coffee since we left the States and it tasted SO GOOD! Then we took home 3 homemade cinnamon rolls and shared them with Eric and Shawnda. They babysat Kaela while we went out. It was a GREAT breakfast! Then when we came back Shawnda and I took our calico (material), zippers and thread to Rose's sister so she could start sewing our couch covers. Shawnda and I are hoping to get those back before Wayne and Weezie come but, we will see if that happens on Island time. This afternoon Aaron and

Eric set up wood poles in Eric and Shawnda's front yard for our volleyball net. Tomorrow afternoon we are having our first youth event. (Youth means older teens to young adults here). It will be a great way to help the young people get to know each other better. We plan to set bi-monthly youth nights. We will have a devotional, snacks and play volleyball.

Monday 6-20-05

Yesterday's volleyball youth night went great! We had six guests come to play – they all came with Gomon and Ure's family. They all seem to be good prospects for Bible studies, too. Rachel was supposed to come do laundry for me today. This is the 3rd day that she has missed. We are now pretty sure that the Mormon church leaders told her not to come. The last study we had was over the Godhead. We covered several points about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that were in direct contradiction to Mormon doctrine. I also gave her the papers of what we studied (my notes) so that she could take them home and study them on her own. The Mormon church has a track record of forcing their followers to quit meeting with Christians to study the Bible. You think it would send out alarms to their followers that they accept the Bible but, will do whatever it takes to keep their members from studying it. This saddens our team a lot – especially Shawnda and I since we were starting to get to know her and studying with her. We all really like Rachel and hate to see her so spiritually mis-guided. The Mormon's are an especially frustrating group here because they suck many young people into their church by materialism. They give them new clothes to wear and even go so far as to pay for some to go to University. That is very difficult to compete with because the Church doesn't work that way. So many Ni-Vans have so very little money and possessions that I can see how the Mormon church is appealing to them. What they don't realize is that they are being pumped full of spiritual sewage! We will just have to combat this problem with patience and prayer! In the mean time if I see Rachel in town we are going to have a serious talk. It may be my only chance to tell her how important it is for her to follow the Bible, the only true Word of God! I love Rachel and I care for her soul and because of that I must tell her that what she is practicing is not right

Tuesday 6-21-05

This afternoon Lissie came over about 1:00pm. She was bored at her house so she came to see what Shawnda and I were doing. Shawnda was working on her Bible study for Yoland, so Lissie and I hung out at my house and talked for a while. Then her Aboo, (Bislama for Grandfather) Eddie, came by to talk with the guys. When he came I could tell he was hot because he had walked to my house, so I offered him a glass of water. He asked what else I had to drink by prompting me, "water and". I told him that he could have "water or water or water or water". Which is true! The only thing cold I had to drink was water! But, did he want a cold drink? No! He was hot and sweating from all his walking and what did he want to drink? HOT TEA! These Ni-Vans are just so funny sometimes. They will drink hot drinks sitting in the sun in 90% humidity, I think! So, I boiled some water and made him some hot tea. Lissie says that not everyone is that way. She just thinks her Aboo is weird! Ha. Then, at 2:30 Shawnda and Lissie left to meet Yoland for the Bible study. I planned to not go today since Kaela was sleeping and there would be no one else at the house to stay with her. But, Shawnda, Lissie and Yoland all walked back to my house and we had the Bible study here. It was a great time of study and also fun to talk with just us young girls!

Tonight, Eric had a Bible study with two guys named Flexon and Daniel. He has been studying with them for several weeks now. He came over about 8:00pm and told us that they both wanted to be baptized. We were all so excited! So we got all our things together, went

and picked up Morris and Rebekah, who happened to be in town. We also picked up Mike and we went to Malapoa point so they could be baptized. The excitement of them being baptized was wonderful in itself but, it was especially neat because there was a full moon out and the sky was clear and full of stars. There is nothing so beautiful as watching a baptism in the ocean by the light of a full moon!

On a side note – later Eric told Aaron and I and Shawnda all about what led to the point of them wanting to be baptized. It turns out that Flexon (who came to worship on Sunday) was ready to be baptized that day. But, he didn't do it because Eric didn't ask him if he wanted to. That is an interesting culture trend for Ni-Vans. They don't want to do *anything* that would be an inconvenience to you. It is important that we convey that when it comes to salvation there is no time to wait! If someone is ready to be baptized they must tell us! We see this attitude of "extreme consideration" in Yoland also. When Shawnda asked her if she wanted to study the Bible again on Friday. She said, "Only if you want to. I know you are busy, so only if you have time". We are like, "Yoland! That is what we are here for! We are never too busy to study the Bible!" So many interesting cultural differences...

Wednesday 6-22-05

Aaron, Eric and Mike all left this morning for their trip to Paonangisu Village. Paonangisu Village is on Efate (the same island we are on) but, farther north. They will spend Wed. to Sun. there. Right now there are only 2 Christians living in Paonangisu and they meet faithfully (as far as we know) every Lord's Day – just the two of them. When Aaron and Eric were in Epau they begged them to come and teach in their village. So the guys will spend four days teaching and evangelizing. On Saturday Shawnda, Kaela and I, along with other ladies from Vila will go to Epau Village for Ladies Day. Then, Shawnda, Kaela and I will spend the night and the guys will pick us on Sunday morning and take us to Paonangisu for worship. It will be a very busy weekend for all of us!

Tonight we went to Bible study at Steven and Rose-Hanna's. For some reason attendance was down and it turned out that it was all women. Shawnda, Ure, Rose-Hanna, Yoland and I were the only adults there. So we sang together and then each shared our favorite Bible verse. At the very end Steven got home so we sang about 3 more songs and then he led us all in a closing prayer. Lissie was supposed to meet us at their house and walk home with us after church but, she didn't make it for some reason. So at 8:00pm Shawnda and I decided to go on home, Steven walked us since their house is just 2 streets over from ours. It isn't a long walk but, it isn't safe for white women to walk alone at night. Plus Shawnda and I are scardy cats and wouldn't have walked home by ourselves anyway! So it worked out well. Lissie came to our house soon after we got home.

Thursday 6-23-05

Today was laundry day for Shawnda and I so we spent half of the day driving back and forth from Mike's house with loads of laundry. Good thing he doesn't live very far away! We are just glad he has a washing machine. We take our loads of laundry, put them in the washer, wait for them to finish, put in a new load and take the first load home to hang on the clothes line. After we finished with all of that we ate lunch with Lissie and then she had to go to work. Shawnda and I ran a few errands this afternoon and then relaxed while Kaela took her nap. We had our last Bislama class tonight and we were both relieved. Two days a week for two hours during meal time gets to be a drag after a while. We did learn a few new things in class so we were glad for that. Our team was a little disappointed with the class overall. It was more of a dialogue class than a class where we learn vocab and grammar. We did

practice grammar some but, mostly we just practiced talking and didn't cover vocab at all. But, what can you do when you aren't the teacher? Looking back we probably could have done just fine without the class since we were already speaking pretty well. However, you don't know a thing like that till you are finished! Hindsight is 20/20!

Friday 6-24-05

Shawnda and I worked on finding a transport to take out to Epau tomorrow. Stephen is supposed to be working on that for us but, as of now we only have one option for a transport and it isn't very good. A guy offered to take us out to Epau for \$40 one way. That is kind of a rip-off. Aaron called this afternoon and told me that if we can't find one for \$50 round trip then I should just plan to take the car out and anyone who needs to come back to town can take the Epau transport back into town when it goes in the afternoon. Because we haven't heard from Steven yet that looks like our most likely option. We also had Bible study this afternoon with Yoland. Tonight when Lissie gets off work and comes to the house we are all going to watch *Oklahoma*. She has never seen a musical before so Shawnda and I feel it is our duty as women to introduce her to the American musical classics! This should be fun!

Sunday 6-26-05

We left yesterday morning for Epau at 8:00am. Since Steven couldn't find us a transport we ended up taking mine and Aaron's car. It isn't really the ideal village transportation since it is just a little Tico and sits low to the ground. With the road conditions and big potholes driving can be a challenge. But, Shawnda, Kaela, Ure and I made it there just fine. Before we left Ure told us that we should have someone stay at our house while we are all gone so Lissie said she and her cousins Kal and Manu would come stay the night on Saturday.

We arrived in Epau and Shawnda and I got ourselves and Kaela all set up in our little cabin. It was a very nice place to stay – probably better than we will ever find in most villages. It was close-up to Ata and Rosie's house and they had built it a few years ago for some members of the Peace Corp that stayed with them. It was a small cabin (big enough for 2 twin beds and we took Kaela's pack-n-play for her to sleep in). It also had a natangora roof (thatch roof) which was nice because it rained that night so we stayed nice and dry and it didn't have the noise that you find with a corrugated steel roof. After we arrived those of us from Vila along with some of the women and several children sat and talked for quite a while. They decided to wait and have Ladies Day in the afternoon since a couple of the Christian women wouldn't get back from the market until then.

At about 11:30am they served us lunch. It was a very good lunch. Manioc (root crop) lap-lap – that actually wasn't bad, rice with island cabbage and grapefruit. After lunch they put some mats under a tree in the yard and we all sat and talked and rested for quite a while. Kaela began to get tired by then and was ready for her afternoon nap since it was 2pm. So I went to the cabin to try to put her down for a nap. This usually takes time when we are somewhere new because she takes a long time to fall good and asleep. I think she is afraid because she doesn't know where she is and she is afraid I might leave her. So I laid down with her on the bed for quite a while singing her to sleep. I stayed so long that I actually fell asleep for a while too! By that time she was good and asleep so I was able to leave her in bed and sneak out of the cabin. She ended up taking a nice long nap which she desperately needed!

Ure ended up not getting to stay for Shawnda's lesson for Ladies Day. Since the women in Epau decided to have it in the afternoon she had to catch the transport back at 1pm and get back to town. After I left the cabin they started Ladies Day. There was

Shawnda and I, 5 women from Epau (Leisande, Leisong, Winnie, Rosie and Leiwas) and several children. You notice several of those names started with “Lei”. “Lei” means woman and it is their Village name given to them. I don’t really understand when it is given to them, if they are born with it or not or why some women have it and some do not. It may just be that their parents liked the name and likely named them after another family member. Who knows. I will have to work on figuring that out. It works the same way with “Kal” for men, meaning man. Shawnda did the devotional talk for Ladies Day and did a great job! I was very proud of her especially since she had to do the whole thing in Bislama. Very difficult....I will have my turn in August at Eton. Ladies day was as follows: we sang several songs, had a prayer, Shawnda did her lesson, we sang some more and then had a closing prayer.

When Ladies Day was finished Shawnda and I and several of the children went down to the river to feed the fish. This was the first time I have ever fed fish a banana. They liked it! On the way back the girls picked flowers and put them in Shawnda’s and my hair. The children here are so sweet! When we got back to Ata’s place Winnie, who is Ata’s daughter, heated a pot of water so I could give Kaela a bath. Winnie is 24 and is a great Christian young woman! She worked all day to make our stay comfortable and enjoyable and even though she is only 24 she a leader among the women at Epau. Anyway, Winnie heated Kaela’s water and put it in a round tub outside on the coral, so I gave Kaela a bath. It was apparently the big event because she had quite an audience!

For dinner we had boiled yellow manioc and rice with meat and noodles and hot tea to drink. It was all very good. After dinner we women and Ata sat outside their house and talked for quite a while. (It was dark and about 7:00pm) by now. Then Winnie decided that we should sing and she went and got her song books and we sang for a long time. At about 8:00pm Kaela was getting tired so I excused myself and went to go put her to bed. By the time I got her ready for bed it was 8:30 and I laid down also so she wouldn’t think I was leaving her before she went to sleep. I had gotten ready for bed also, and since we were in the village, where days usually start early and end early, I was in the mind-set for sleep. The women finished singing and Shawnda came in at about 8:45 or 9:00. She had to go to the bathroom and since it was dark – we were on the buddy system. So I got up and we went to the bathroom – a building not too far from our cabin, and for a village it was very accommodating. We came back and went to bed and I slept until about 11:30pm. That was a real disappointment to me because when I woke up I thought for sure it was 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. To find it was only 11:30pm --- I thought, “This is going to be a long night!”. Shawnda was awake also so we talked for a minute and decided to go to the bathroom again. When we got back we realized neither of us were very sleepy so, we started talking. I mentioned to her how our cabin reminded me of church camp and that got us started on our camp stories! We talked and talked and laughed and talked and before you know it, it was 2:30am! We decided we had to go to the bathroom again (I think we had too much hot tea at dinner) so we went and then I really got the giggles and we just couldn’t control our laughing but, we tried because we didn’t want Kaela to wake up. Then we talked and laughed a lot....till 4:30am! I have not stayed up that late talking in a LONG time! Probably not since college and it was just so much fun! We both knew that we would regret it that morning when it was time to get up at 6:30 but, it was worth it! We had a great time!

We woke up at 6:30am – it came too early but, surprisingly both of us felt pretty good. We had hot tea and hot, fresh island bread with peanut butter for breakfast! It was SO GOOD! There is nothing like fresh baked bread! On Saturday, Winnie gave Shawnda and I Island Dresses of our very own to wear to church. She even had one made for Kaela. We were so touched because material isn’t cheap – especially for someone who lives in the

village. Shawnda and mine were the same print – orange and red with an “island scene” on them and Kaela’s was blue with white flowers. The thing about island dresses is that they are made big...very big and roomy. Shawnda calls them Mother Hubbard dresses...”covers everything but touches nothing”. And that is what they did. She and I made a pact that we wouldn’t wear island dresses unless someone gave one to us – and then we would only wear it to the village. The reason is that those dresses are very comfortable, no doubt, but you can’t tell if you are gaining weight because your clothes never get too tight! That is not a good thing! But, we were very grateful for the dresses and enjoyed wearing them out in the village. While we won’t wear them in town, most likely, we will probably wear them every time we go to the village for worship.

At 9am – Eric came in the truck to pick us all up and take us to Paonangisu for worship. Several of the adults and about 15 kids went with us. We just piled into 2 trucks. Kaela was very happy to see her Daddy when we got there and she wasn’t willing to let him out of her sight! We were both glad to see Aaron again! I told Shawnda that it would be strange when we see Aaron and Eric after the four days they have been gone not to give them a hug and a kiss hello. Island culture says that men and women do not show any public displays of affection. So, we had to abide by that since we were in the presence of so many Ni-Vans. We worshipped with the 2 Christian men there (there were also several visitors and a lot of children). Then we ate lunch...lap-lap (I skipped that today), rice, noodles and meat, pieces of beef, cooked bananas and papaya. After lunch we sat and talked for a long time and I played with the kids for a while. Kaela was getting ready for her nap by this time but, we weren’t ready to leave yet. So I went in the house where they guys all stayed and laid down with her on Aaron’s bed. She went to sleep after not too long...and so did I. It is just too hard for me to stay awake when I am laying down next to her and she looks so calm and relaxed – it makes me tired! --- (I am my father’s daughter! My Dad used to fall asleep reading me a bedtime story when I was a child!) We left to come back home at 2pm. By the time we got home we were all exhausted and spent the rest of the evening relaxing and unpacking. Aaron and I went to sleep at 8:30pm, we were so tired!

Monday 6-27-05

Today I had to do laundry so I took a load over to Mike’s house. Before I left our house, though, I saw Shawnda and she said she was taking Eric to the Doctor. Eric and Mike were both sick during their stay in the village. Eric has a bad skin rash that is similar to poison ivy and giving him some pain. Mike came down with flu-like symptoms in the village but, he didn’t know why. I knew for sure he was sick when he left in the middle of worship to go lay down. I went over to Mike’s, started my laundry and checked on him. While I was talking to him I noticed that one of his legs was swollen near the ankle and shin and it was all red and splotchy. I had an idea that he had an infection of some kind and I told him to get ready and I would take him downtown to the Doctor. He didn’t even argue with me --- so I knew he was REALLY feeling bad. I called Aaron and told him what I was doing and that I would be home in a little bit. When we got to the Doctor, he was able to go in immediately, so I just waited on him. Then we went next door to the Chemist (Pharmacy). Mike had a couple of errands to run in town, which I was against whole-heartedly. But, he wouldn’t listen to me so, I made him promise to take a bus everywhere he went and not try and walk anywhere. I then went back to his house to check on my laundry. And so my laundry escapades began....the washer had gotten stuck on “fill” so it kept filling and filling and filling and it was overflowing! Good thing his washer sits outside on his porch (common in this country to have an outside laundry)! Anyway, I fixed the problem but, I had to battle the washer overflowing

the rest of the morning as I tried to do laundry. I came back home and made lunch for Aaron and Kaela and I.

At 1:00pm Shawnda and I had a Bible study with Yoland. After we finished, we went grocery shopping at Nambatu supermarket. Then we came back and we both tried to get some housework done. Wayne, Weezie, Betty Henderson and Ken Smith all come in tomorrow so we wanted our houses to be cleaned and ready for their visit! Kaela was taking a nap so I actually got a lot done during that time. At 3:30 Aaron left to go pick up Samson for their Bible study. He didn't come back until 5:15pm – there was a change of plans. At 5:00pm Eric took Shawnda, Kaela and I out to Rose's sister's house to check and see if our couch cushions were finished. We REALLY wanted them done by the time our guests arrived! They were done! Yea! We were both so happy! Then we came back and we all ate dinner. After dinner Aaron, Shawnda, Kaela and I gathered our cleaning supplies and went to Mike's house to clean. Ken Smith will be staying with him and Mike's house needed some serious cleaning to be ready for him and Mike was in no condition to do anything. Eric couldn't go because he isn't allowed to do anything that might irritate his rash (i.e. sweat, use chemicals, etc.). Mike slept the whole time we were there cleaning...we all felt bad for him – he was just so out of it! With 3 of us working, we finished cleaning a lot earlier than we had thought so then we came home. Aaron and Eric met about the plans while Wayne is here. Shawnda and I worked on putting our new cushion covers on our couch cushions. Finally it is bedtime and boy am I ready! It has been a long and busy day!

Tuesday 6-28-05

This morning started off very busy! Today Wayne and Weezie Burger came into town along with Ken Smith who is a close friend of Wayne's and Betty Henderson one of our supporters and a great encourager of our work. We were so happy to see them! Especially Wayne and Weezie who have become like parents to us – we dearly love them! I was so excited to see them step off the plane and walk across the runway I was just giddy! We took them to get settled in at their hotel and then us women went to Women's Bible study at Rose-Hanna's. We all had such a nice time and it was a great opportunity for the women here to get to know Weezie and Betty. Afterwards, we took Ure home and then headed into town to get gas, go to the bank and post office. Then we rested for a while and all of us ate dinner together at our house. Eric was having a Bible study with Daniel and Flexon tonight so they came and ate dinner with us. I think they might have been a little overwhelmed by all of the white people talking so loud. It wasn't till I moved here that I realized how loud we white people are! Ni-Vans in general are very quiet (sometimes so much that you can't hear what they say) and I have to be careful not to express my opinions publically in the usual "American" way. Later in the evening Wayne, Weezie, Betty and Ken all went back to their motel (and Ken to Mike's house). After they left it was party time at the Brandell's! Wayne and Weezie brought 5 (yes, FIVE!) suitcases of goodies and things we requested with them. Our families and some of our friends sent care packages with them for us! We were so excited – it was just like Christmas! What a great day! A visit from the people we love and Christmas in June!

Wednesday 6-29-05

Since it was Ken, Betty, Wayne and Weezie's first day in Vila they just relaxed all day and did a little bit of looking in the tourist shops and going to the market. Betty can't wait to eat in the food stalls at the market so we will go do that for lunch on Friday. I think she will really like it. Eating in the market is a great local experience and the food is very good. Since this was

their first time (for the trip) to worship with the Brethren in Vila we had a traditional fellowship meal after Bible study. Shawnda and I made a big pot of American style stew, took a big bowl of rice, and some beef stir fry soup. It was a great time for some of the local Christians to get to know them better. Betty, unfortunately was pretty sick that night. I have a feeling she had the same jet lag sickness that Shawnda and I had our first day here in April.

Thursday 6-30-05

We took a trip around the island today. It was lots of fun and my first time to go farther than Paonangisu. I loved it! We all piled into Eric and Shawnda's truck – Eric, Shawnda, Betty, Weezie, Kaela and I all sat in the cab. Aaron, Wayne and Ken rode in the back. Mike opted to stay at home and try to get his leg feeling better since he had already taken the trip earlier after we got here. It was a great way for our visitors to see the island and meet the Christians that live in the villages without having to try and make it out for a Sunday or Wednesday.

We stopped in Eton Village and visited with a few Christians and went to Eton Beach. Eton Beach is a local tourist site --- a BEAUTIFUL beach with a great view of the ocean. It costs tourists \$3 a person to get access to the beach but, since we are friends with the woman who takes the money, we were able to get in for free. Her name is Dora and she is just the sweetest lady. She told us that when we come to Eton on July 4th, if anyone wants to go swimming they can come in for free. What a deal!

We then stopped at Epau Village and stayed and talked with the Christians there for quite a while. It was nice to see our friends again since we just left there on Sunday. Some of the nicest people live at Epau! The children were on lunch break from school so they were especially happy to see Kaela!

Then we continued on to Paonangisu Village where we stopped at a Christian's house, Chris, and had lunch. We brought sandwich makings and a box of bottled cokes and set to work making lunch. We all got our sandwiches and then shared the rest with Chris' family that had prepared lemonade and papaya for us to eat also. We really enjoyed our visit and I think the 3 kids that were there really liked getting the bottled cokes to drink! I don't think they get much like that way out in the village where they live. When we left, we gave Chris' daughter, Lissie, the rest of our food makings: leftover bread, peanut butter, jelly, crackers and paper towels. Out in the village they can use anything like that! So, as a thank you for letting us stop and eat there we gave it to them.

We left Paonangisu and headed the rest of the way around the island. The rest of the trip was very interesting! The scenery changes dramatically to big hills that provide great views of the whole island and at times miles and miles of ocean. My little Tico would never make it on that road! It is in horrible condition at times and Eric's truck even had to struggle up the hills because they were so steep! I did find on this trip how hard it is to switch back and forth from English and Bislama. I find myself talking Bislama to the Americans and then remember I have to talk in English, so I try to switch. It is very difficult and I often find myself speaking sentences that are half English and half Bislama!

When we got home, about 3:30pm we were all very, very tired so Wayne told us he was going to take us all out to dinner. So we all went home and relaxed for a while, got dressed and then went out to The Waterside Restaurant. It is a very nice restaurant that sits right by the harbor and has a beautiful view of the water! Although...it was dark and we couldn't really see the water, we did get to see all the boats lighted up which was neat! Aaron and I both had the BBQ ribs which were excellent. I was feeling like I needed to have fish, since we were at a nice restaurant on an island country, but, the ribs just sounded so

good to me! But, I had to pay my dues for them! My system isn't used to all that rich American style food that I used to eat all the time --- Pepto and I made fast friends tonight!

Saturday 7-2-02

Today was recuperation day. We were all exhausted from the events of yesterday's preaching in the park. They guys especially had put a lot of work into the preparation of it, as well as preaching. We seemed to have a really good turn out and it was a great way to get the name of Christ's Church out in the community. This morning Wayne and Weezie, Ken, and Betty all boarded a plane for Espiritu Santo, one of the northern islands. They will spend the weekend there encouraging 2 of the Christians on that island, Joel and Robina Siri. They get back on Monday morning.

Shawnda and I worked on our menu for the 4th of July celebration at Eton Village. The Christians there invited us out to celebrate American Independence Day. She and I will be cooking various kinds of American favorites to take with us to the village. We are making spaghetti, corn casserole, BBQ beef, mashed potatoes, fajita meat (to eat over rice because it is too much of a pain to make that large a number of tortillas from scratch) and cookie bars. We are all excited for this fun time in the village! We ended the night with dinner and games for our team, which is always a fun time to relax.

Sunday 7-3-05

Today was filled with all kinds of activity. We went to worship at Steven and Rose-Hanna's and afterward there was a potluck. As soon as Shawnda and I got home we began cooking for the 4th of July celebration at Eton. We finalized our menu and are making PB&J sandwiches, spaghetti, BBQ beef, rice, beef fajita meat with onions and peppers, corn casserole, mashed potatoes, peanut butter cookies and brownies. So, we have lots to do to get ready for all that! Then at 3pm we had about 15 youth come to play volleyball and have a devotional for our youth night. The teens weren't as interested in the devotional as we would have liked but, getting them comfortable with coming here is a good step towards getting to know them better. Hopefully as we get to know them better we will find some good prospects. At about 7pm Lissie and her cousin Kal came over to talk. They stayed for a half hour then Lissie left with the Brandells to go to see Yoland in town. Kal was so involved in a Sports Illustrated magazine that Aaron had that he didn't even know they were leaving! I told him that if he wanted to he could just stay and read the magazine. Which he did. One thing I love about Ni-Vans is that they are so relaxed! Aaron and I didn't feel like we had to hang out with him in the living room and "entertain" him. Aaron worked on the computer in the office, I put Kaela to bed and then read a book in our room and Kal sat and read in the living room. He finished about 8:30, thanked us and left for home.

Monday 7-4-05

We had the best 4th of July celebration today! Shawnda and I spent all morning finishing up our cooking to take to Eton. Then we all got dressed to go. Shawnda's mom sent our team America t-shirts and Kaela a little red, white and blue outfit so we could all look festive for the occasion! At 1pm we left our house along with Samson, Ure and Kal. We then went to pick up Wayne, Weezie, Ken, Betty and Lissie. Aaron and I took Weezie, Shawnda, Lissie and Kaela in our car along with all the food. (This morning when Wayne, Weezie, Ken and Betty all got back from Santo we found out that Weezie had slipped on some water while getting out of the shower and had hurt her elbow pretty badly. It was all purple and swollen and she was in quite a bit of pain.) After we picked up Lissie and were driving through town the trunk

of our car opened! We were fortunate that all that flew out was Kaela's sun hat – which a bus ran over! But, the way our trunk is positioned on our car we could have very easily lost all the food as well! I think Shawnda and I might have cried if that had happened! So, I retrieved the hat from the middle of the street and we headed out to Eton.

The celebration was supposed to start about 2:00 or 3:00 but, ended up not starting until 4:30. That is island time for you! We laid on the grass for a while and waited for people to show up, went and watched Rebekah finish making lap-lap and even took a walk down to the ocean and watched the tide come in for a while. Then at 4:30 about 15 adults and 25 children all gathered in the church building and we sang for about a half an hour. In the mean time more adults showed up and even more kids came so we began the program. Eric and Shawnda handed out hand-held American flags to all the kids and some adults. Then all of us Americans sang the "Star Spangled Banner" and then we all sang Vanuatu's National Anthem. Vanuatu's national anthem was kind of funny because the Ni-Van's knew little more than the chorus so for 2 verses there was a lot of mumbling and when the chorus came they really belted it out! It is a catchy little tune and I keep hearing some of us singing it! Afterwards, Ken stood up and talked about how America gained their independence and Aaron interpreted for him. Then, Aaron talked about our flag and the constitution. Then, Eric told about how we celebrate the 4th of July in the States. Then, we sang another song, had a prayer, and took a break so we women could get our food together. Shawnda, Mike and I unloaded our car of food but, we had a couple of items that needed to be re-heated: spaghetti and BBQ beef. We took those to Rebekeh's and heated them over the open fire she had going just for us. I think by the time we got around to eating I don't know how many adults there were --- maybe 30? But, I counted close to 65 kids! Nearly everyone tried our American fare and seemed to like it, especially the spaghetti and the brownies!

While the kids finished eating Ken told them 3 Bible stories (he is a great story teller!) and the guys went outside to get ready for the surprise we had for the kids. They were all pretty curious about what was going on outside – so when Ken finished, the kids stampeded out the door to go see what was happening. Shawnda and I along with a couple of local women corralled them into lining up single file. Aaron and Eric handed out sparkler sticks and light-up glow sticks. I think the children were a little confused as to what we were giving them at first! Shawnda's parents sent us 50 light-up glow sticks (the kind that you crack and they light-up) and we had bought 100 sparklers at the store. As soon as the first sparkler was lit they were all pretty excited! They ran around and played with them as long as someone had one lit. The thing about sparklers, though is that they look cool but, die out fast. So, it wasn't long before the kids were on to the glow sticks. There wasn't enough to go around but, they were pretty good about sharing. I wish everyone in the States could have seen them playing with those red, white and blue glow sticks! There were kids running everywhere, yelling and shouting and laughing, they made them into bracelets and tied them around their ankles and chased each other, they threw them in the air as high as they could. It was so great to stand back and watch them run and play and yell. Ken told us that we gave them a memory that would last a life-time and I think he is right. I was just thrilled to giddiness to be able to see the happiness that it brought to those kids!

Tuesday 7-5-05

Today is the first day of our gospel meeting. We have all been running around all crazy-like! Part of my problem was that I COMPLETELY forgot that we had Tuesday Women's Bible study so I ended up not getting anything done this morning that I had planned. Then, we spent all afternoon getting ready for the meeting and we also had a Bible study with Yoland.

Shawnda planned a GREAT study where we simply went through the book of Acts and read the stories of how people were saved. It is a great and *simple* reminder that today we are saved in the same way people were saved in the New Testament: hear the Word, believe it, confess Christ as the Son of God, repent of our sins, and be baptized so that our sins may be forgiven. At 4:30 we left to go to Seaview Takeaway to grab some dinner before we had to be at Dumbea Hall at 5:30. Wayne and Ken spoke on who the Holy Spirit is and what the Bible says that He does and also how the Holy Spirit revealed God's Word to us. The guys chose the Holy Spirit theme because there are plenty of churches here (and in the States) that are teaching all kinds of beliefs on what they think the Holy Spirit does and how He is working today and very little of it is biblically based. So much teaching is "feeling" based..."I felt the Spirit do this or that" but, few people take the time to read the Word and see how the Spirit is really working today. Even in the States so much of what people believe about the Spirit is based on what we read in books (secular and "Christian" devotional type), see on TV, or hear from our friends. Many people believe the Spirit is working miracles today and whispering in their ears. Sometimes I think God must be nearby saying, "Hello? Hello? Is anyone reading what I have to say about my Spirit?" And that is my little sermon for the day. Anyway, the meeting went great. We had a good turn out with a good question and answer session afterwards. We were all beat by the time we got home at 10pm, especially Kaela! And we will get up and do it again tomorrow!

Wednesday 7-6-05

This morning Shawnda got up and found that she had a small cut on her foot that had gotten infected. Cuts can be a real pain here, especially when they are small and you don't notice them right away. She didn't notice it and it got infected so she was in quite a bit of pain throughout the morning. At about 11am she, Lissie and I went to go see the doctor at the hospital (because medical care is free at the hospital – you just have to have time to wait). We really lucked out because there wasn't a line so she got to see the Dr. right away. He gave her some pain killer and penicillin that should help with the pain and help the cut heal. After lunch I went to the grocery store to get the food for tonight's dinner and tomorrow night's dinner. Then came home and spent the afternoon making dinner and getting ready for the meeting tonight. We all went to the gospel meeting but, Shawnda wasn't feeling well so she, Kaela and I came home at 7:00 before it was over so that she could go to bed. I am anxious for Aaron to get home and tell me how things went tonight.

Thursday 7-7-05

Today was filled with last minute preparations for Wayne, Weezie and Betty's departure. Betty was already scheduled to leave today but, with Weezie needing surgery on her elbow, she and Wayne ended up having to leave early. It was hard to let them go so soon. It seems like they just got here and in some ways it was harder watching them leave this time than it was in April. In April we knew it would only be 3 months till we saw them again. This time we know it will be a year before we get to see them again. That made saying good-bye a little more tearful, at least for me.

Our crate still hasn't arrived yet. Since June 27th, its scheduled date of arrival at the port, we have been in constant contact with the shipping lady. She is probably tired of Aaron calling. It is a little frustrating because we have gotten several different stories of where our paperwork is in the custom's process (all from this same lady)! And we keep hearing the famous words, "it will be delivered tomorrow". Now we just laugh...we know better than to believe that! And still we wait. Sometimes patiently...and sometimes not so patiently. I

guess all this waiting will make us appreciate our belongings all the more when we get our crate! What a happy day that will be!

Tonight was the last night of our gospel meeting. Eric spoke for Wayne (in Bislama and did a great job) and Ken also spoke. The topics were: The Church and Salvation. As far as I know we have Bible studies set up with 4 people as a result of this meeting and the hopes of a few more. Ironically, Eric has a study with the guys who were there to do the sound. It was their job to be there and run the sound and it ended up that they were interested in what was being said and wanted to study. I also have a study with 2 young girls, they are 13 and 15 years old and are related one of the sound guys, I think his name is Alsen. One of the girls, Aline (Eilene), is his sister, and the other one is his cousin. Her name is Netasha (Natasha). --- the parentheses is the American pronunciation of the Bislama spelling. --- Anyway, I am really looking forward to studying with them on Sunday afternoon. They are both extremely nice and although they come from the same family, Netasha is Catholic and Aline is AOG (Assembly of God).

Saturday 7-9-05

Yesterday and today have been quite relaxing, a much needed break from all the hustle and bustle of the gospel meeting. Last night was team night – the guys met, we had dinner and played games. Ken was able to join us since he was in town and we all enjoyed his company. Today, I have been playing catch up on some of my housework. Shawnda and I went grocery shopping today, planned meals for next week along with events for Kaela's birthday. Tonight there is all-you-can-eat pasta and pizza at the Rossi Restaurant for 800vt. Which is a REALLY good price for a nice meal like that, so we are all going there to eat dinner. We have reservations for 7pm. That is nearing Kaela's bedtime so I am hoping she will be in a good mood...we will see.

Sunday 7-10-05

This morning we had Bible class and worship in a small rented building behind Dumbea Hall. It was a job trying to shut out all the noise of the concerts from two other churches that were meeting on the premises. But, worship was very nice for our congregation and we had several visitors. Afterwards, Shawnda had a Bible study with a woman named Pella and her teenage daughter, Rose. Pella talked about wanting to be baptized sometime this week. As for Rose, Shawnda stressed the importance of her making her decision for herself and not just because that is what her mother is doing. Aaron and Mike also had a Bible study with 2 visiting men, Andrew and Stewart.

This afternoon I was to have a Bible study with Netasha and Aline at 2pm. By 2:30pm they had not arrived and I thought they weren't going to show. but, they came at 3pm right on the nose. I think we were just confused about what time we were studying. Ure ended up being sick today so she wasn't able to come. Lissie came instead to help me with my Bislama. I was thrilled to have her help because I ended up needing it several times! The study went well and afterwards Netasha had 2 questions – one about infant/child baptism and one about praying to Mary. Netasha is the one that is Catholic. We studied several good scriptures that answered both of her questions. Particularly about infant/child baptism. We studied Acts 2:38 – baptism is *for* the forgiveness of sin. Infants and children don't have sin so you shouldn't baptize them. Also, Acts 8:34-39 – Biblical baptism is done in much water – sprinkling isn't baptism.

It was a great study. We will study again next Sunday about Old Law/New Law and the worshipping on the Sabbath.

Monday 7-11-05

I had one main goal today. Laundry. Mike's washing machine has been broken for the last 2 weeks. I was doing really good at washing a few things every other day but, then I haven't done ANYTHING for the last week and the laundry was really piling up! So, today I spent the morning taking laundry to Mike's, bringing it back and hanging it up. Not much else happened today. It has been a pretty quiet day.

Tuesday 7-12-05

Happy Birthday to Kaela today! She is one year old. Already. Time sure has flown by. It feels like I am always saying that but, it is true! I remember when she was waking up 2 or 3 times a night and I thought that time was going by painfully slow. Once, she started sleeping through the night – time really began to pick up its pace! It has been a great (and sometimes challenging) year! We celebrated her birthday this morning at breakfast. Breakfast is her favorite meal of the day – she eats 2 pieces of buttered toast every day for breakfast...and then cries when the meal is over. She got b-day presents from Ken, Grammy and Grandpa (Aaron's parents) and Ure today. Her big b-day party with cake and all the team is on Friday. We had to wait to have it since the guys are all teaching classes at Eton this week. They finish tomorrow. It should be a fun party! Her presents today were: Ken gave her a picture that he had specially printed off and made for her at a local store, Aaron's parent's gave her a See-N-Say, a new outfit and put money into her education savings account, and Ure made her a very small bilum (woven bag) that is just her size and also made her a new skirt! It was a great first b-day for her!

Aaron taught at Eton village this afternoon and into this evening. When he came back he said that tomorrow we are all supposed to go to Eton for the teaching and a farewell meal for Ken. He will be leaving on Thursday. Also tomorrow – in honor of Kaela's first birthday, the leaders at the church in Eton will give her a Custom Name! We are all excited about this and anxious to find out what name they have chosen.

Wednesday 7-13-05

This afternoon our team along with Eddie and Timothy (who live at Eton Village), with Ken and Alsen (who Eric is studying with) all went to Eton village. This is the last day for Bible study classes at Eton. Eric taught on Marriage, Divorce and Re-marriage and did an excellent job on teaching the truth and simplicity of what the Bible teaches on this subject. Ken also spoke some final words of encouragement to the members at Eton to stay faithful in their Christian walk. By the time both of them finished speaking it was about 5:30pm. Morris stood up to give Kaela her new Custom Name! We were all so excited to find out what it was! He first wrote it on the blackboard and then explained what it meant. Her Custom Name is Leisal Legor. It is pronounced "Lay-sahl Lang-gor". It means "drifting guard". He told us that they chose this name because she has drifted from the United States to come be with them and watch over them in Vanuatu. Aaron and I like her new name very much – its meaning makes it special. Afterwards, they gave her a new mat that Rebekah (Morris' wife) made and a new island dress that Janet (their daughter) made. Then all the children gathered around her and we all say "Happy Birthday" to her. It was interesting because after the traditional first verse of "Happy Birthday to you..." they sang a second verse of "Happy long life to you..." Then, we took several pictures of Kaela in her new island dress and the children gathered around her. It was a wonderful and special time that brought tears to my eyes!

After that was over some of the members of Eton gave gifts to Ken and thanked him for coming. They gave him a shirt that said Port Vila, Vanuatu and a piece of calico with the Vanuatu map on it, and also an island dress that someone made for his wife, who wasn't able to come. After that we all ate the dinner that they had made for us: sausage links, ramen noodles, manioc lap-lap with coconut milk, taro (root crop) with coconut milk, grapefruit and cookies. It was a great evening and one that we will be telling Kaela about as she grows up! --- A side note: some of the children were calling her Lei-Le ("lay-lay") for short so we will see as time goes on what the Eton village church members choose to call her.

Thursday 7-14-05

O HAPPY DAY!!! Our crate came today! It has been in Vila for four weeks now and our agent keeps saying, "You'll get it tomorrow" and we keep saying, "Yeah, right." But, it is here! I was sitting at our desk in our extra room when I heard the sound of a big truck outside. I had been waiting for that sound for weeks now. I jumped up to go look and there it was! I couldn't help it – I screamed! (and woke Kaela up with my excitement) Then, while I was running to Eric and Shawnda's back door I heard Eric yell and Shawnda met me at the door and we both screamed. We were beside ourselves with excitement! Aaron and Mike had gone to town to look for a car for Mike so we called them and they headed home.

We couldn't unload the crate until the custom's representative came to check things out. He wasn't supposed to arrive till 1:30pm so we had to wait until then for him to come. We went to lunch with Ken at the Waterside restaurant since it was his last day here. He was to fly out at 4:30pm. Then, when we finished with lunch we came back home and the custom's guy was already at the house. Amazing! He was on time! We opened the crate and started unloading it. With all of us working it took us 3 hours to unload. We were certain the custom's guy was going to check several of our boxes against the lists that we had spent hours working on while we were packing. But, he didn't. He just stood there and watched. He even helped us unload a few things which surprised me. He didn't check anything! He just told us it was all "straight"...meaning there were no problems, no fees!!! Yippee! We had already paid some duty on the stuff we brought in and we didn't want to encounter any problems or more duty fees.

As soon as we said our good-byes to Ken (it sure was nice having him here!) and the guys left to take him to the airport, Shawnda and I dove into our boxes! What fun! Things are a little chaotic around here with boxes everywhere but, it is fun to see things that I packed up months ago – some things I even had packed before Kaela was born! It was a little difficult trying to unpack and attend to Kaela. She was wanting my full attention. (Aaron had gone to a meeting with Samson). But, at least I got a few of my kitchen things put away and a few things in our bedroom set up. What a great day!